

Date: 4/12/68

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TO: SAC, DENVER
FROM: SAC, MEMPHIS (44-1987) (P)
MURKIN
(RM): Memphis

*Copy
to Bureau
3/24/69
RD*

On the afternoon of 4/11/68, ~~Attorney~~ RUSSELL X. THOMPSON, who is a law associate of WILLIAM B. INGRAM, who until 12/31/67 was Mayor of the City of Memphis, Tennessee, and whose offices are located at Room 1002, Home Federal Building, Memphis, Tennessee, simultaneously made contact with SA WILLIAM H. LAWRENCE of this office and with Director of Fire and Police of the City of Memphis, FRANK C. HOLLOWAY, stating that he had confidential information from a prospective client, whose name he could not divulge and whose real name he did not actually know, which could conceivably have some bearing on the solution of the assassination of Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., President, Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), who was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, on the evening of April 4, 1968.

Thereafter, SA WILLIAM H. LAWRENCE accompanied by Inspector R. E. ZACHARY, head of the Homicide Bureau, Memphis, Tennessee, Police Department, and a National Academy graduate, went to the office of Attorney THOMPSON and there met with him in the presence of his law associate, Attorney WILLIAM B. INGRAM.

- 2 - Denver (RM)
- 2 - New Orleans (RM)
- 1 - Memphis
 - (2 - 44-1987)
 - (1 - 170-866, RUSSELL X THOMPSON)
 - (1 - 105-366, United Klans of America, Inc. (UKA))

W. H. Lawrence contacted

44-1987-Sub B-3

h 44-1987-519

Approved: R G Jensen
Special Agent in Charge

Sent _____ M Per Russell X Thompson

Both THOMPSON and INGRAM emphasized that they would have to insist that their identities be protected at all costs by both the FBI and the Memphis Police Department, inasmuch as there was a possible client-attorney relationship in some of the information which they were about to furnish, but that they were doing this out of what they felt was a civic duty. They stated that they wanted to furnish the information simultaneously to both agencies, lest they give the appearance of playing favorites.

Thereafter THOMPSON orally furnished the following information:

On the night of April 10, 1968, about 9:30 p.m., he received a telephone call at his residence in Memphis, Tennessee, from an unknown individual who gave him a Latin-sounding name. The party contacting him indicated that he was calling from a phone booth either at the Memphis Municipal Airport or located nearby; that he had just arrived in Memphis and wanted to know if THOMPSON was the RUSSELL X. THOMPSON who had received considerable newspaper publicity in connection with representing various criminals, including the purported killer of the Millington, Tennessee, taxi driver, the former client being GLEN NASH. When THOMPSON replied in the affirmative, the unknown caller was asked what was the nature of his inquiry; and he told THOMPSON that it had to do with a murder. He thereafter made arrangements with THOMPSON to appear in THOMPSON's office at 8:30 a.m., 4/11/68. He insisted on coming in early, possibly arriving before THOMPSON's secretary would be there. He stated that he would not consent to having anyone present in his conversation with THOMPSON and THOMPSON agreed.

At about 8:30 a.m., 4/11/68, THOMPSON received a phone call from the unknown individual who stated that he had overslept, would have to eat breakfast, and would be in the office momentarily.

At approximately 9 a.m., 4/11/68, the unknown individual appeared in THOMPSON's office, alone.

THOMPSON described this unknown individual, who he said gave him a Latin alias, which he did not feel privileged to furnish at this time, as follows:

Race:	White
Sex:	Male
Age:	About 37
Weight:	About 175 lbs.
Build:	Flat stomach, reasonably well built
Height:	About 6 feet tall
Complexion:	Normal, in that it was neither pale nor suntanned but was typical of one who had spent a winter in a mild or cold climate.
Hair:	Medium blond, medium length, combed partially back on his head and a little to the side, and the hair tended to stand up slightly. His hair was neat.

THOMPSON stated further that this individual's complexion appeared to have a few minor acne scars which were minimal in nature, giving it a slightly rough texture. His face was rather long and somewhat slender and he had a somewhat pointed nose. He wore a dark blue suit with a faint pin-stripe possibly one-half to one inch apart. He wore a long-sleeve button-down-collar shirt and a reddish tie. He told THOMPSON that he had been in the Army, apparently during the Korean War; that the Army had taught him violence and then turned him out without untraining him. He did not elaborate. He talked as though he were probably a high school graduate or could possibly be one who had a partial college education. His diction was regional in nature, although he bragged to THOMPSON that he could change his accent at will. He told THOMPSON that he could speak Italian and Spanish and illustrated this fact to THOMPSON by speaking some in both languages. THOMPSON stated that he would have to give him the benefit of the doubt as he is not familiar with either language. He also bragged that he had a German Luger which he claimed had once been owned by the late Adolph Hitler. He used some slang in his talk and appeared to be an extrovert, and he was somewhat braggadocio in his over-all manner.

He pulled up his left arm shirt sleeve and showed THOMPSON an alleged tattoo which was just above his wrist with the initials "T. S.," with the "T" being somewhat offset to the top over the "S." He claimed that this was some sort of a Gypsy symbol and then inferred that the "TS" could conceivably be his real initials. He was rather oblique and mysterious in this reference.

He told THOMPSON, although he did not exhibit any, that he had tattoos on other parts of his body, including his arms. He readily admitted that he was using an alias, stated that he never gave anyone his real name but did indicate that the "TS" could always identify him. Paradoxically, he commented that a favorite trick of criminals was to affix in a removable ink on exposed parts of their bodies various tattoos or tattooed initials or symbols which would give an observer the impression that they were tattoos when committing a crime and thereafter the perpetrator would wash this inked impression which had given the tattoo indication.

At the outset, the unknown individual told THOMPSON that he, personally, had not killed anyone but that he felt that he knew who had killed Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., in Memphis on 4/4/68, and that he was in effect inquiring on behalf of his unidentified friend at this point to determine whether or not a lawyer would be available to represent his friend if necessary. THOMPSON stated that he gave the impression of a person coming to an attorney asking a series of questions about a so-called third party, when in reality the prospective client was really referring to his or her self. He indicated that he had arrived in Memphis the night before via airplane from Chicago, Illinois, and that on arrival in Memphis, he had made contact with an unidentified female whose name he had known and that he spent the night with this female and rather openly stated that she was a prostitute. He even bragged to THOMPSON that she had given him \$200 and laughed saying "This is the first time any whore gave me money." Thereafter stated that he knew the party responsible for killing Dr. King. In fact, he said that the party responsible was his roommate. He indicated that he has at least two and possibly three roommates and stated that he lived at 3050 Hudson Street, Denver, Colorado, and told THOMPSON that the phone number there, not recalled by him, was listed to one of his roommates, a DONAVAN CURTIS.

The unknown individual then elaborated that the person who had killed MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., namely his roommate, had the first name of PETE, last name unknown. He told THOMPSON that the weapon used to kill Dr. KING had been a .30 caliber rifle manufactured by the Savage Firearms Company and that the Remington Rifle described in the newspaper accounts of the killing had not been used. He further stated that the Savage rifle used by PETE was fired directly at KING from a distance not more than 30 yards, from the second story balcony of the Lorraine Motel, where KING was standing at the time he was shot. (Inspector ZIGHEARY later pointed out that any spot within 30 yards of the balcony within range would have placed the assailant right in the middle of Mulberry Street which runs north and south in front of the Lorraine Motel.)

The individual then told THOMPSON that he was not worried about any future ballistics examination or identification because he could assure THOMPSON that the barrel of the Savage rifle has long since been disassembled and melted down. He further told THOMPSON that there were no Mustang automobiles involved in the getaway by the assailant. He told THOMPSON that instead of an automobile being used as the getaway vehicle, that PETE had used a motor cycle for his getaway. He further indicated that PETE is still in Memphis and that PETE was a "professional gunman."

He further stated that the original stories in the press about Mustangs being parked near the roominghouse on South Main Street, the rear of which overlooked the Lorraine Motel, was erroneous because he personally knew that a big Cadillac was parked near the rooming house and that there were only a total of four cars parked in this immediate vicinity and he claimed to know the makes of all of the cars. He mentioned them but THOMPSON could not recall any other than the Cadillac pointing out that the individual would not allow him to make any notes and that THOMPSON had to make notes after the person left to refresh his memory.

The prospective client further told THOMPSON that his home was originally in New Orleans, La., but that he is temporarily living in Denver, Colorado, at the above-mentioned 3050 Hudson Street address. He kept emphasizing that his reason for contacting THOMPSON was that he might engage in another crime and would want an attorney available

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He indicated that on arriving in Memphis on the night of 4/10/68 before going to the home of the prostitute to spend the night that he had gone to the Chisca Plaza Hotel Bar and gotten something to drink but was afraid to check into any hotel or motel fearing that he might be traced.

He then asked THOMPSON if he knew how he, the prospective client, could make contact with the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). Thompson told the individual that the only Klan organization with which he was aware was the United Klans of America (UKA) and that he understood that the head of the Klan in the State of Tennessee, name not recalled, operated a restaurant in Brownsville, Tennessee, the county seat of Haywood County, some 80 miles northeast of Memphis, Tennessee.

The prospective client stated that he would like to go to Brownsville and talk to this Klansman and he asked about the possibility of chartering a plane to fly to Brownsville and was told that it was not believed that any airports exist in that area. He carefully pointed out that he never drives an automobile as he fears that he might be identified by being stopped for some traffic violation. He indicated that he might go to Brownsville by bus.

The prospective client readily admitted that he literally hated Negroes based on the fact that a Negro in New Orleans a year or so ago had killed his wife and that the police in New Orleans had not told him at the inception of the investigation but that he had later been permitted to confidentially read a Police Department report and learned therefrom that his wife had also been raped by one or more Negroes and that this has embittered him toward the Negro race and he used this to illustrate his hatred for black people.

He indicated that he might be interested in the killing of some other well-known Negro leaders such as H. RAP BROWN, current National Chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), or STOKELY CARMICHAEL, former Chairman of the SNCC. By the same token, he kept emphasizing that he personally had not committed the KING killing.

In referring to Negroes or black men, he kept using the term "Niggers" and not Negroes. He emphasized that he always used phone booths in making phone calls. He wanted a book of matches, and when THOMPSON offered him a book which had his name thereon he stated he refused to take them as he did not want to become identified with THOMPSON, yet later proved his inconsistency by accepting a business card of THOMPSON on which the prospective client himself wrote THOMPSON's home phone number, claiming that he was writing it in Yiddish.

He gave the impression that his over-all approach would be to contact white hate groups such as the KKK or similar groups, feeling that if he could create an atmosphere during which enough key Negro leaders such as RAP BROWN and CARMICHAEL would be killed that this would satisfy his personal passion and seeming hatred for Negroes in general. He indicated that he felt that a Klan group or hate group might furnish financial backing for a professional killing of some other important Negro.

THOMPSON said he kept referring to the fact that he had a very intelligent roommate and kept inferring that the physical evidence recovered by the Memphis Police Department shortly after the assassination which was found in a doorway on South Main Street in Memphis had merely been left there by the assassins as a decoy.

No mention was made regarding specific legal representation for his so-called roommate PETE.

With regard to his occupation, he made no mention thereof as to any occupation which he has followed and his over-all appearance was quite average. THOMPSON did note that he wore his clothes rather tight-fitting. He refused to tell THOMPSON where he planned to go after leaving Memphis and/or possibly Brownsville, Tennessee.

THOMPSON stated that the prospective client thereafter furnished other information of a client-lawyer nature which THOMPSON did not feel he could divulge pursuant to his legal code of ethics.

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While still in THOMPSON's office, THOMPSON attempted to make a phone call to a DONAVAN CURTIS, Denver, Colorado, 3050 Hudson Street, and was told by the Phone Company Information that there was no listing for any CURTIS at 3050 Hudson Street.

He also called the Memphis Chamber of Commerce and had them check out-of-town city directories, namely the one for Denver, Colorado, and was told that there is a 3050 Hudson listed in the City Directory, but it is shown as being vacant, although the young lady who was giving the information to THOMPSON when asked by him was unable to find the date of the Directory Affixed thereon. She further told THOMPSON that she could locate no DONAVAN CURTIS in the city directory nor could she locate any CURTIS DONAVAN.

THOMPSON also recalled in conclusion that the prospective client very definitely implied to him that he had been involved several years ago in the kidnap murder of a prominent brewer in the west. He inferred that it was in the southwest and that the beer had a German-sounding name.

(It is noted that the only such kidnap murder recalled by SA WILLIAM H. LAWRENCE and Inspector ZACHARY was the COORS kidnap-murder in the vicinity of Denver, Colorado, several years ago, it being noted that the individual responsible for this crime has long since been apprehended.)

LEADS:

NEW ORLEANS DIVISION:

Will, through Homicide, New Orleans Police Department, attempt to identify the unknown suspect based on his story that his wife was killed and possibly raped by a Negro possibly within the past year.

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DENVER DIVISION

AT DENVER, COLORADO

Will attempt to identify unknown suspect through inquiries re 3050 Hudson, Denver; the alleged DONAVAN CURTIS; and the UNSUB "PETE," bearing in mind that the person who contacted THOMPSON may have been trying to implicate a fictitious "PETE" wherein he himself may have been involved.

DENVER DIVISION

AT BROWNSVILLE, TENN.

Will contact DOYLE V. BRADY, Grand Dragon, United Klans of America (UKA), and sound him out as to whether or not he has been contacted by any strange white males.